UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/29
11 January 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 9 JANUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I refer to the complaint dated 4 January 1999 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations (S/1999/3) concerning the border clash which took place on 12 December 1998 between Iraqi and Saudi patrols. In order to clarify the situation, I should like to point out that the incident took place at 1600 hours on 12 December 1998 after an Iraqi patrol attached to the customs police in the Iraqi Governorate of Najaf had observed three Saudi armoured cars in the restricted area between the two control posts of Lisiyah and Hakim, one kilometre inside Iraqi territory. The Saudi cars opened fire on the Iraqi patrol as soon as they were observed, obliging that patrol to return fire in self-defence.

It is evident from the above that the complaint made by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Saudi Arabia is completely unjustified in view of the fact that the incident took place inside Iraqi territory. It is quite clear that the Saudi patrol had violated the territory of the Republic of Iraq, that individuals from that patrol were the first to open fire and that the response from the Iraqi side was in self-defence.

While condemning the Saudi encroachment on Iraqi territory and the attack on Iraqi customs police, we request you to intervene with the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, pursuant to your responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, in order to halt such aggressive and unjustified acts, which constitute a clear violation of the provisions of international law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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